

Jenny Moves to Albuquerque

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Red Fitbit Band

Purple soft top queen- sized airbed

Pink glass cake platter

Set of six coasters – white with sanddollar etching

Cricut machine

Stainless Steel colander

Lennox fine etched crystal vase, still in box

Black plastic art material organizer

Mid-century modern table – 28” by 22” (Needs Murphy’s oil)

Full PURPLE (her emphasis) six-piece comforter set

Two 16” square frosted glass tables

Three large cans of pumpkin

Two IKEA drawer organizers

Four pink glass depression era salad plates (“They were my mom’s”)

Two organic, bacon-wrapped fillet mignons (frozen)

Two “thingies to make you beautiful. They didn’t work for me.” (Curling irons)

All the above are marked “gifted” on the Buy Nothing Group Facebook page. I took the Red Fitbit band. When Jenny dropped it off, she explained, “I’ve never been able to wear red. Even though I’m a natural brunette, the color just washes me out.” When she had her colors done, that was confirmed, she says. Purple, but not purple with a reddish tinge, is her perfect shade. I like to wear red.

She explained to me that she was moving to Albuquerque. Her landlord here in Tacoma was raising the rent too high, and she just couldn’t afford it. She’d moved to Tacoma for the same reason my husband and I did a couple of years ago: rents and housing prices were more affordable in this historically working-class town than in ritzier parts of the Northwest, like Seattle and Bellevue. We had an inheritance and some savings and a pension and sold a house in Indiana, so we were able to buy a retirement condo. Jenny told me she had thought she’d be able to live comfortably, if frugally, on the \$3500 income she gets with her part-time job and soon to receive Social Security. But she can’t make it work.

I asked her, “Why Albuquerque? Do you have family there?” “No, it just seems like a good place to live. And housing prices are much more affordable.” I tell her I’ve loved Albuquerque the couple of times I’ve visited—the high desert air, the Mexican-influenced architecture and the food. I remember visiting once and sitting out in the old town square for hours, listening to Andean pipe music on a cooling summer evening. I don’t tell her I’ve never moved any place all by myself, where I didn’t know anyone, just so I could afford to live.

She's left now. Of course, Facebook is ubiquitous, and I could reach out. She was planning to make two trips, back and forth, three eight-hour days each way, because she can't drive twelve-hour days any more. Renting a U-Haul is too expensive, and she hopes she'll be able to fit most of her clothes into the back of her hatchback, along with whatever else she was able to keep. Probably nothing red, but I hope she got to retain as many purple items as possible.

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